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SERBIAN PARASITOLOGY INSTITUTE STUDIES LIVESTOCK DISEASES

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Most of the institutes, bureaus, and experimental stations in Yugoslavia, where scientific personnel are working on the development of agricultural production, were established before the war. Their primary purpose is to relate their work to work in the field and help state farms, farm-work cooperatives, and farmers as a whole.

The Institute of Parasitology in the Serbian Academy of Science, Belgrade, which was established in 1947, has been very successful in combating various livestock diseases. Prof Ceda Simic, administrator of the institute, points out that the institute's emphasis on livestock diseases in recent years has been due to the collectivization of Yugoslav agriculture, which, in bringing together previously dispersed livestock, brought various contagious diseases with it. The institute has placed emphasis on prevention rather than cure.

In 1951, the institute had considerable success in combating coccidiosis, which has inflicted, and is now inflicting, large poultry losses. In areas where the disease was most widespread, it killed 50-80 percent of the chicks. The problem became acute when large poultry farms were established on state farms, because it was so devastating that some production plans were never fulfilled. Frequently three fourths of the poultry died, for the disease spread very quickly where large flocks were grouped together.

After prolonged laboratory research, where the parasites causing the disease were studied, poultry infected, and the resistance of chicks studied, Slobodan Sibalic and Zlatibor Petrovic, assistants in the institute, concluded that coccidiosis could be prevented. They determined that the primary cause of

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the disease was excessive crowding in chicken houses and a lack of sanitation. They emphasized prevention rather than cure, because curing the disease is very expensive, since Yugoslavia does not produce the necessary medicines, and medicines are not always effective.

In spring 1951, under the management of a technician from the institute, preventive measures were introduced at the state farms at Dobricevo, Cuprija, and Vrsac Ritovi, where the disease had previously killed more than 70 percent of the chicks. The incubator-hatched chicks were separated from the hens for at least 2 months, the chicken houses were cleaned and disinfected daily, and more attention was given to feed. The death rate among chicks on the two farms was reduced to 5 percent.

On the basis of this experience, the institute will issue detailed instructions to all state farms concerned with poultry raising.

The gadfly, which is widespread throughout Yugoslavia, inflicts considerable damage on livestock, including ruining the most valuable part of the hide along the spine. It is estimated that hides of horses and cows lose 25 percent of their value in this manner.

From April to July 1951, scientific workers conducting experiments at Dobro on the Danube River found that 80 percent of the livestock there suffered from the gadfly, that almost the same percentage was infected in eastern Serbia, and that the gadfly is very widespread in other sections of Serbia.

The method employed in destroying gadfly larvae is fairly slow. Larvae are extracted from under the hide with small tweezers and then killed. A group from the institute visited a majority of the farms at Dobro and extracted larvae from livestock in this manner. However, this method is unsatisfactory, since systematic work must be conducted for many successive years throughout Serbia.

The pigeon fly inflicts great damage on Yugoslav livestock. According to Professor Simic, it cannot be eliminated but can be checked. Scientists of the institute have made a detailed study of the life of the pigeon fly and are able to predict when it will appear. In 1950, when there was little change in the water level of the Danube River, scientists were able to predict an invasion by the pigeon fly and the direction the swarms would take. Agriculturalists were warned, so that no livestock on state farms died because of the pigeon fly. Vera Zivkovic, an associate scientist at the institute, is working on the problem of the pigeon fly.

In 1950, the institute began research on piroplasmosis, which frequently kills sheep. Experiments and tests were conducted on state farms and farm-work cooperatives in the Banat. It was determined that the disease is transmitted by a special type of tick which attacks sheep during June and July. In 1952, the first preventive measures against the disease are to be introduced. To prevent its spread from infected pasture areas, sheep are to be pastured on new areas. Special pits are to be constructed in which sheep will be bathed regularly from the end of May until the beginning of July. This will be the first practical experiment in the struggle against piroplasmosis.

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